

## **AGENDA ITEM III A**

### **PROPOSED ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

#### **LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER**

#### **MASTER OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY**

##### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

As Allied Health Science disciplines have evolved over the past fifty years or so, ever-increasing levels of education attainment have been required as a result of ever-increasing subject matter knowledge needed for professional practice. This dynamic is reflected in the Louisiana State University Health Science Center's request to upgrade its existing B.S. program in Occupational Therapy to a Master of Occupational Therapy. Recently, the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) mandated that, effective 2007, all entry-level occupational therapy programs must be at the master's level. The primary purpose of this request from the LSUHSC, therefore, is to comply with this mandate.

If this request is approved by the Board of Regents, the last baccalaureate class will be enrolled in May, 2001, and will graduate in August, 2003. No baccalaureate-level coursework will be offered after the final 2003 graduation.

##### **STAFF ANALYSIS**

###### **1. Objective**

The proposed Master of Occupational Therapy program is designed as an entry-level clinical master's degree for professional practice. Once approved, it will replace the existing B.S. in Occupational Therapy program. The new master's program is very similar in structure and intent to those of existing Master of Communications Disorders and Master of Physical Therapy programs at LSUHSC, which also prepare baccalaureate-trained students for allied health professional practice.

###### **2. Need**

As noted above, all entry-level occupational therapy programs must be at the master's level by 2007 to be eligible for professional accreditation. Currently, over 50% of the approximate 120 occupational therapy programs in the United States offer entry-level master's programs. If the State of Louisiana is to continue to prepare students to become licensed occupational therapists and to serve the health, education, and welfare needs of its citizens, the proposed program conversion must be accomplished soon.



It should be noted that the University of Louisiana at Monroe currently offers B.S. in Occupational Therapy and A.S. in Occupational Therapy Assistant programs. Louisiana, as most other states nationwide, suffers from a shortage of available licensed occupational therapists.

### **3. Curriculum**

Students who wish to enter the program will have had to receive a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution (with a prescribed set of 29-32 credit hours of requisite courses), possess active CPR certification, earn an appropriate score of the GRE examination, and document twenty hours of direct contact with a practicing occupational therapist. The proposed program of study will require two full academic years (fall, spring, and summer semesters) plus an additional summer of study and equate to 90 credit hours. A complete course listing and program schedule was provided in the proposal. The proposed course of studies appears to meet ACOTE requirements for accreditation and state educational requirements for licensure.

### **4. Students**

The current B.S. program enrolls 55 students per year; the same number will be admitted annually to the proposed MOT program. After attrition and further academic pursuits by graduates, the program licenses approximately forty occupational therapists per year.

### **5. Faculty**

The program currently employs 15 FTE faculty: seven at New Orleans and eight at Shreveport. Five existing faculty have earned doctoral degrees; one faculty is presently completing doctoral studies; seven faculty hold master's degrees; and two faculty have baccalaureate degrees. Baccalaureate-trained faculty will be required to attain a master's degree prior to program implementation.

Existing faculty resources should be adequate to support the proposed MOT program.

### **6. Library and Other Informational Resources**

The LSUHSC states that current library/informational resources are generally adequate to implement the proposed MOT program. The Center estimates that approximately \$31,200 will be needed over the next five years to enhance learning resources required of the MOT program on both campuses.

### **7. Facilities and Equipment**

Existing facilities at the New Orleans campus are stated to be excellent; eventually, a new building will be required for the Shreveport campus, but the existing structure is adequate for now. The LSUHSC does not project the need for any new facilities or equipment to implement the MOT program.

### **8. Administration**

The proposed MOT program will be administered through the Department of Occupational Therapy within the School of Allied Health Professions.

## **9. Accreditation**

The proposed program is designed to meet new accreditation standards of the Accreditation Council of Occupational Therapy Education due to come into effect in 2007. The LSUHSC will apply for ACOTE program reaccreditation in 2002.

## **10. Settlement Agreement Issues**

The desegregation Settlement Agreement does not provide for the establishment of a similar or related program at a predominantly black institution of higher education in Louisiana.

## **11. Costs**

The proposed program conversion can be accomplished within existing State appropriations. Moderate new costs will be covered through additional tuition revenues raised as a result of a more extended period of student study prior to graduation. Current program costs of \$1,109,077 will increase accordingly to \$1,285,722 by year five.

## **STAFF SUMMARY**

The proposed upgrading of the B.S. in Occupational Therapy program at the Louisiana State University Health Science Center to a Master of Occupational Therapy is necessary to meet new program accreditation requirements adopted by the American Council of Occupational Therapy Education. It appears that resources needed to accomplish this program conversion are already in place on both the New Orleans and Shreveport campuses of the LSUHSC. The Health Science Center does not projected the need for additional State support beyond that which is already available.

Hence, the staff recommends approval of the proposed Master of Occupational Therapy program at the LSUHSC, beginning Spring, 2001. In addition, the staff recommends termination of the B.S. program in Occupational Therapy, to become effective after enrollment of the last baccalaureate class.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

*The staff recommends that the Academic and Student Affairs Committee grant approval for the request from the Louisiana State University Health Science Center to approve a new Master of Occupational Therapy program (CIP Code 51.2306), beginning Spring, 2001. Further, the staff recommends that the Committee terminate the B.S. program in Occupational Therapy program at the LSUHSC, effective June 1, 2001.*

***In accordance with Academic Affairs Policy 2.13 - Professional Program Accreditation, the Louisiana State University Health Science Center shall maintain appropriate professional accreditation for the new Master of Occupational Therapy program.***